

DEVELOPING A COMMUNICATION PLAN

Make sure you can communicate with staff, funders, the community, and the people you serve in an emergency. Communication will make or break a disaster response. From a simple note on the door identifying your new location to a Public Information Officer correcting news reports about your agency, communication is the key to letting people make the right decisions.

Questions to consider when developing a Communication Plan

Regarding Staff & Clients

1. How will staff receive critical information about the status of your organization during an emergency? (*examples:* employee emergency hotline, Web site and/or Intranet, radio or TV news reports, communication tree)
2. How will the people you serve receive critical information about the status of your organization during an emergency? (*examples:* electronic, verbal, in-person, recorded message, sign on door)
3. Who approves the messaging? Does s/he have a designated back-up?
4. Who is authorized to communicate the information? Does s/he have a designated back-up?
5. How will you find out about the condition of the people you serve who are off site?
6. How will you be able to deliver critical information to the people you serve in the languages they understand?

Regarding General Public & Media

1. Who develops and who approves messaging about:
 - Agency operational status
 - Damage assessment
 - Services offered or changed
 - Funds needed
 - Volunteers needed
 - Other needs
2. Who communicates the message?
 - Are they properly trained?
 - Are the messages they share consistent?

Which communication tools does your facility have?

	Have	Need		Have	Need
Bulletin board/white board	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Pagers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
CB Radios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Palm Pilots/Blackberries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Cell phones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Digital telephones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Runners	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Satellite phones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Walkie-talkies	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Ham radios	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Whistles	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Megaphones/bullhorns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Non-electric dependent telephones	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>			

What are the different methods you can use for communicating with your community?

American Sign Language (ASL)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Language translators	<input type="checkbox"/>
Door-to-door canvassing	<input type="checkbox"/>	Mailing lists, brochures, fliers	<input type="checkbox"/>
Home visits	<input type="checkbox"/>	Radio	<input type="checkbox"/>
Email and listservs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Television	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fact sheets or FAQs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Web sites	<input type="checkbox"/>
Fax machines/WinFax	<input type="checkbox"/>	In-person events, workshops, classes	<input type="checkbox"/>
Information lines (e.g., 1-800 numbers)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other _____	<input type="checkbox"/>

Emergency communication tree

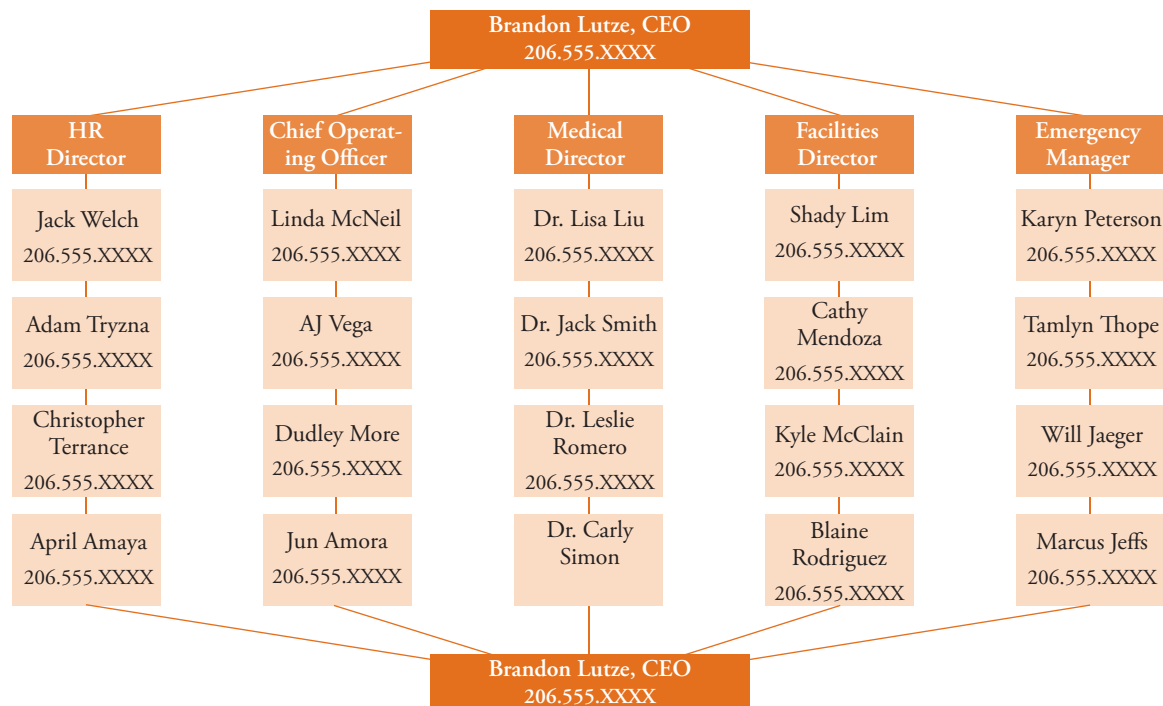
A communication tree is designed so that critical information is efficiently gathered and/or disseminated to key members of the organization. In an emergency, the person at the top of the tree will correspond, via phone or email, with the people listed below them on the “tree.” That person then contacts the next person below them on the tree, and so on until the loop is closed when the last people on the list contact the person on the top of the tree.

If someone on the list attempts to contact a person below them but is not able to reach him or her, that person will move to the next one on the list. Once they reach the next person, they must inform that member that a previous person on the list was not reached. This information continues to get carried down the tree until it reaches the top person on the list.

Phone tree members might include:

- Chief Executive Officer/Executive Director
- Medical Director
- Clinic Manager
- Nurse Manager
- Clinical Director
- Facilities Manager
- Human Resource Director
- Board President/Chair
- Chief Operation Officer
- Information Technology Manager
- Chief Financial Officer/Controller
- Volunteer Manager

Example of a phone tree



Note: Planning for communication with all members of your staff may require a more complex phone tree.

Emergency contact list

Make sure you can communicate with staff, funders, and your community, and the people you serve during an emergency by completing and regularly updating your agency contact list.

Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Home Phone
------	--------------	------------	------------

Staff Members

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Home Phone
------	--------------	------------	------------

Board Members

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Home Phone
------	--------------	------------	------------

Volunteers

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

Name	Office Phone	Cell Phone	Home Phone
------	--------------	------------	------------

Other Key Contacts

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--

--	--	--	--